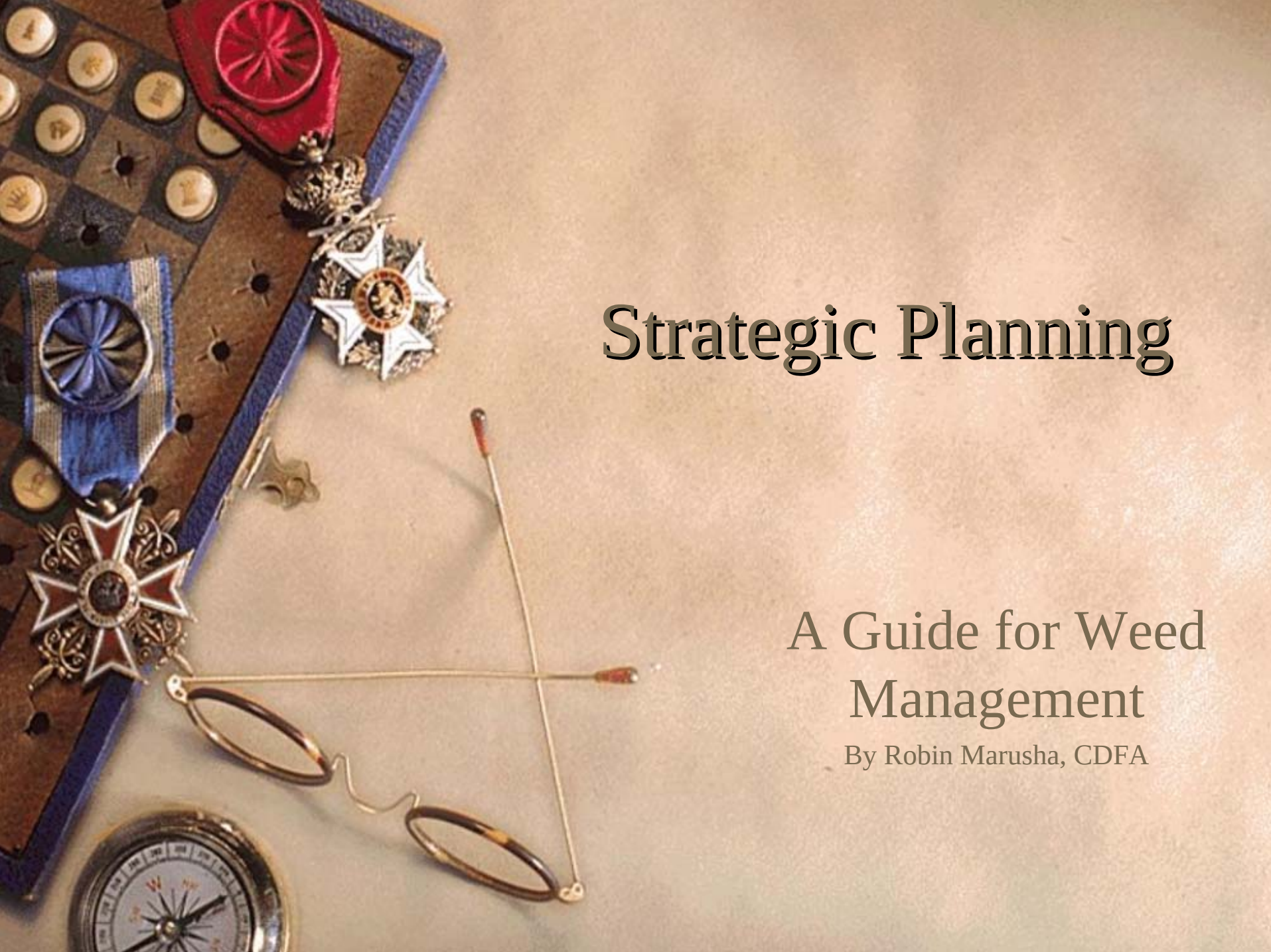


Strategic Planning

A Guide for Weed Management

By Robin Marusha, CDFA

Outline

- Why write a Strategic Plan?
- Structure of a Strategic Plan
- Components:
  - Mission Statement
  - Define the problem
  - Solution:
    - Prioritization Methods
    - Weed Control Hierarchy
    - Education, Awareness, Outreach
    - Prevention
    - Inventory and Mapping
    - Weed Control and Monitoring
    - Funding and Finance

WMA's are still a new thing!

Why Write a Strategic Plan?

- Collaborative process is valuable
- Establish concrete goals and priorities
- Provides a working document in an evolving program; continuity
- Fastest way to bring new WMA members up to speed.
- Represents WMA well to others.
- **Can be used as the basis for work plans and grant proposals.**

Structure of a Strategic Plan

What will your WMA look in 20, 50, 100 years?

Are you working on projects important in the long term?

- Mission Statement
- Statement of the Problem
- Summary of the Solutions
  - Prioritization Methods
  - Weed Control Hierarchy
  - Education, Awareness, Outreach
  - Prevention
  - Inventory and Mapping
  - Weed Control and Monitoring
  - Funding and Finance

Why Develop a Mission Statement?

- Because it's expected of organizations.
- Provides a concise image with which to represent the WMA to the public at large.
- Provides a unifying philosophy for all WMA members.
- Remains consistent through time.
- Remains consistent through generations of WMA leadership.

Mission Statement Example: From "Fullaweeds County"

"The Fullaweeds County Weed Management Area (FWMA) will cooperate and coordinate activities necessary for the prevention and control of noxious and invasive weeds in Fullaweeds County. The emphasis of these activities shall be focused on the **prevention** of noxious weeds and their **expansion** through education and control."

Define the Problem

- The quotable WMA: provides the public with your reason for being!
- Defining the problem helps to define the solution.

Pepperweed

Problem Example:

“The Problem

An explosion of invasive weeds is overrunning Fullaweeds County. These non-native weeds, such as *yellow starthistle* and *arundo*, fall under the classification of noxious and invasive weeds. In addition to being an economic threat, noxious and invasive weeds are robbing Fullaweeds County of its rich biological diversity. Because of Fullaweeds County’s geographic position and high level of commerce, the county will continue to be subject to introductions of new weed species.”

Define the Solution

- Provides a concise outline on which to build a strategic plan
- Provides talking points.
- Even when projects change, the Solution structure can remain constant.

Solution Example:

The Solution

Goals of this Strategic Plan for the coordinated management of noxious weeds are:

1) Increase the profitability and value of cropland and rangeland.

2) Decrease the costs of roadside, park, and waterway maintenance.

3) Reduce fire hazard and fire control costs in the county.

4) Protect and enhance the biodiversity of Fullaweeds County ecosystems.

To accomplish these goals it will be necessary to:

1) Bring about greater countywide coordination, cooperation, and ACTION to successfully halt the spread of noxious weeds and help restore weed-infested lands to a healthy and productive condition.

2) Heighten all citizens' awareness of the degradation brought to Fullaweeds County lands by the explosive spread of noxious weeds.

Components of the Plan

1) Education, Awareness and Outreach
2) Survey, Inventory, and Mapping
3) Prevention, Exclusion, Detection, and Eradication
4) Eradication, Control, and Project Monitoring

Education and Outreach

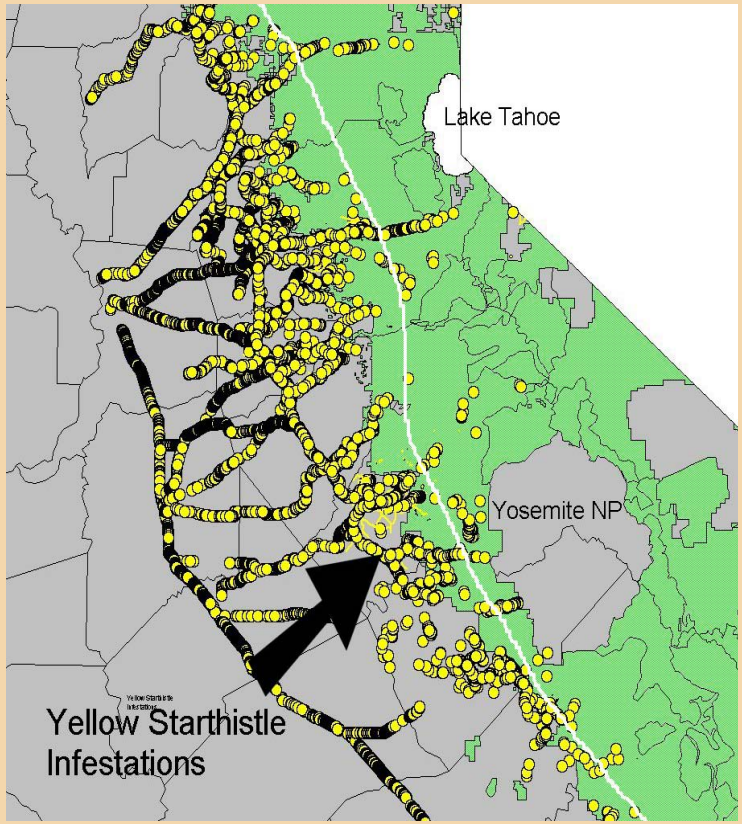
- Weed prevention and control in its own right.
- Outline the education and outreach priorities specific to your WMA:
  - Public schools?
  - Ag sector?
  - New WMA members or volunteers?
  - Media?
- Summarize the **action** to accomplish each.

Education Examples:

- FWMA Dirty Dozen Brochure.
- Weed tour.
- Speakers Bureau.
- Student Education/Service Learning Day.
- FWMA website.

Inventory and Mapping

- CDFA is coordinating a statewide network of WMA GIS.
- Mapping does not need to be done by trained professionals with expensive GPS units!
- With proper ID training, anyone can map weeds either with inexpensive GPS or simple paper maps.
- The weed mapping strategy should be determined by the infestation level and the management goals.



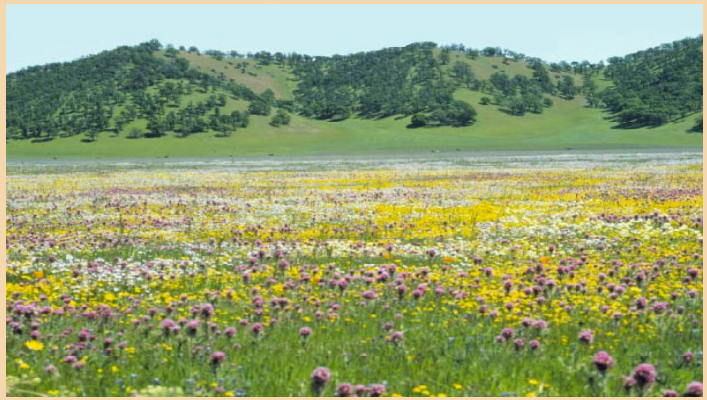
Mapping Strategy Example:

- Coordinate with the Thistleville High School Service Learning Coordinator and biology instructors to have two ‘student weed mapping weeks’ in coordination with the 4H, Boy Scouts, and Future Farmers.
- Hire 2 summer “weed warriors” from the Thistleville Community College to use GPS to map weeds across the county.
- Members of the mapping committee will attend CDFA’s Regional Weed Mapping training sessions in Gotbucks County.
- Provide county weed map sets to all field employees and members of the FWMA members for their use in identifying NEW unknown populations of noxious and invasive weeds.
- Using CDFA’s template, create a Fullaweeds County Weed Mapping Handbook.

Prioritization

- *There are 3 ways in which to determine priorities in your WMA:*
  1) *Choose "important" weeds*
  2) *Choose "important" areas*
  3) *Choose "important" populations of weeds: use firefighting strategy!*

Yellow starthistle



“Important” Weeds

•a. Weeds that are A-rated by CDFA and/or “high” rated by Cal-IPC.

•b. Weeds that have a great economic impact; several interest groups to support control.

•c. Weeds which have control methods available or unique opportunities for control that are particularly economical and effective.

“Important” weeds have been the traditional approach for CDFA.

“Important” Areas

a. Usually, important areas fall under the jurisdiction of one or a few landowners. Less cooperation between stakeholders may be required, but more resources for the stakeholder in question.

b. Weeds that are of great importance to WMA members or the public but are too widespread throughout the state to be eradicated or contained can be managed within sensitive areas.

c. May include conservation areas, parks, key watersheds, or other sensitive ecosystems of priority within the WMA.

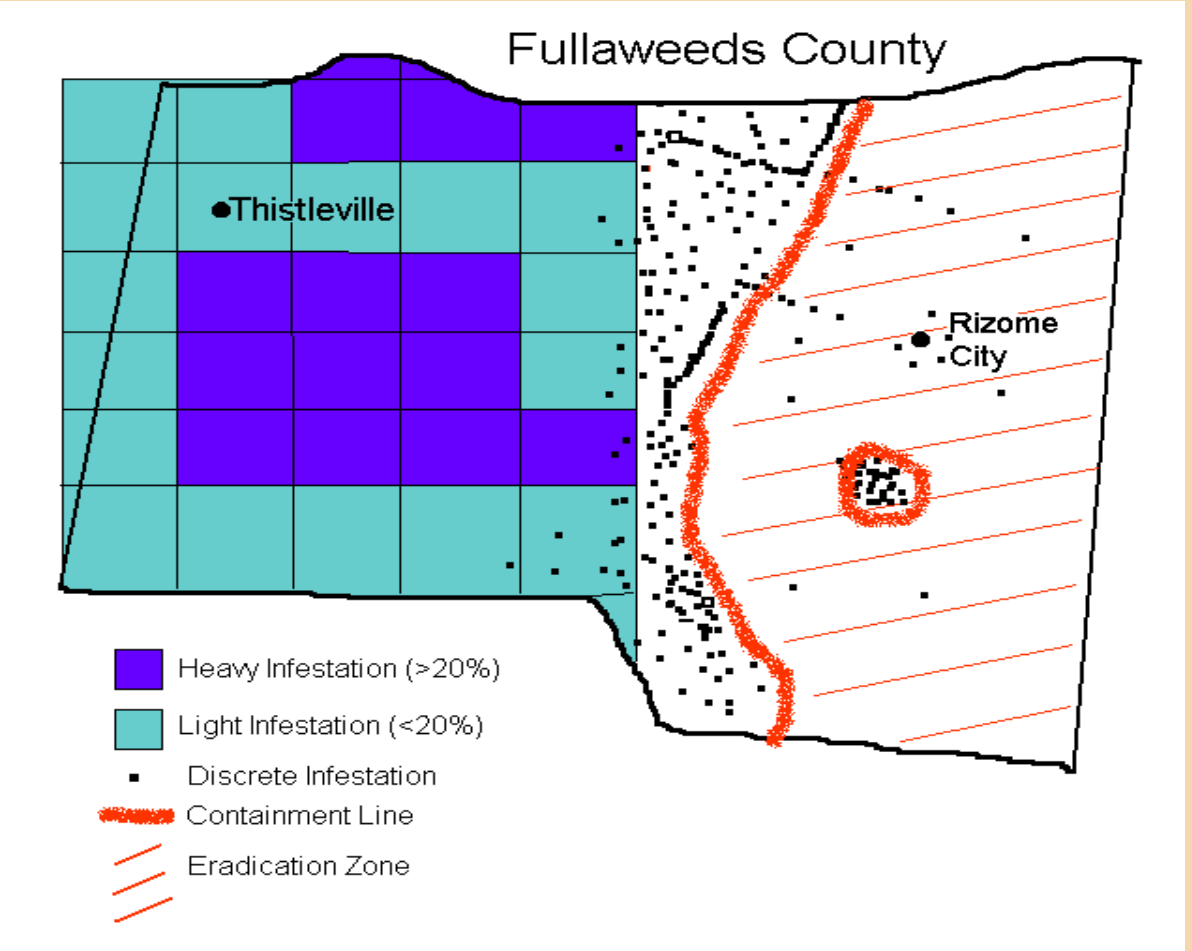
“Important” Populations

a. New introductions to the U.S. This is comparable to extinguishing a new wildfire before it grows out of control.

b. Populations of weeds that are common in other areas, but are not common in a local region. This strategy is a parallel to battling “spot fires” that jump from a wildfire into new areas.

c. Populations that represent the “leading edge” of an invasion. This is especially effective where landscape barriers or climate limit distribution to a “corridor” of spread.

Example: “Important populations”



Define Weed Goal

1) Exclusion
2) Eradication
3) Suppression
4) Containment

Exclusion

- Includes all activities to keep a non-native noxious and invasive species from crossing the border of a region.
- Depends upon identifying the most dangerous weeds likely to infest a given area before they are introduced, and predicting their potential modes of introduction.
- Pathways are then changed or monitored to prevent the weed from entering.

Eradication

- a type of control objective aimed at eliminating all individuals of a particular species within a specified area.
- This objective is the goal when the weed is of considerable economic and environmental concern (noxious) and the weed's population size is small.

Suppression

- a weed management objective aimed at reducing the current infestation density but not necessarily reducing the total area or boundary of the infestation.
- applies to many widely distributed, high-density weeds where eradication is not feasible.

Containment

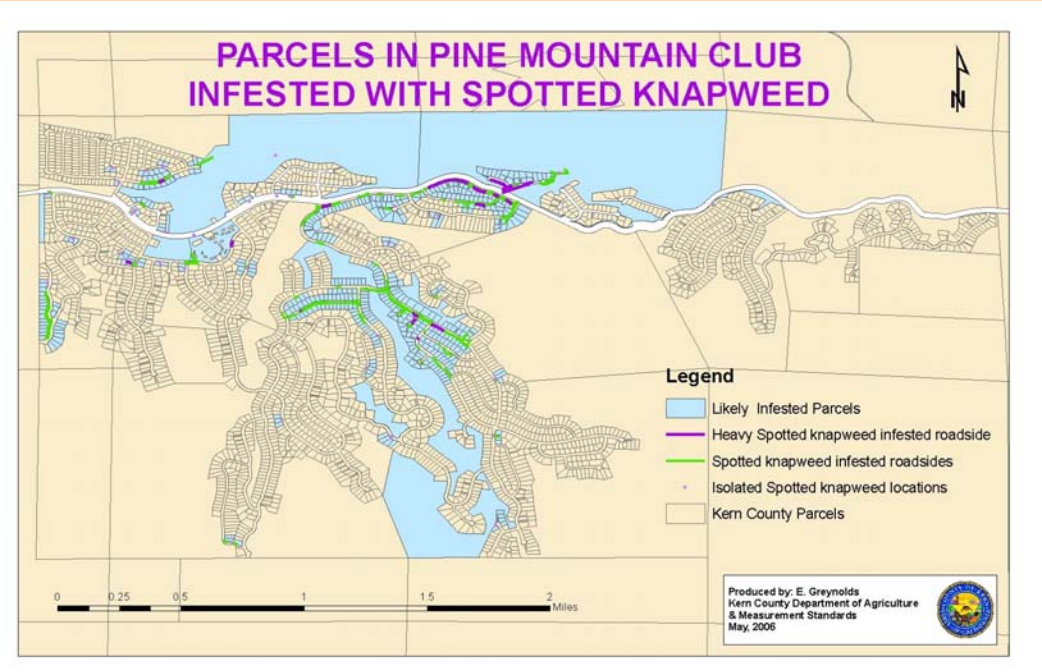
- prevents infestation expansion and spread
- may be conducted with or without any attempt to reduce infestation density.
- an alternative to eradication or suppression.
- focuses on halting spread until suppression or eradication can be implemented.

Monitoring

- Critical no matter what the objective.
- Best if based in simple scientific method:
  - Set up a few transects or plots before treatment
  - Take % cover or density counts
  - Take point pictures
  - Repeat several seasons/years after treatment.
- Doesn't have to be extensive or complicated!
  - Any data is better than no data.
- If applicable, monitor desirables you are trying to protect or enhance.
- **Improves grant proposals!**

Once priorities are defined, with goal for each….

- Make a plan for action!
- List each project
- Generalize the steps to reach the goal
- Assign roles for each collaborator.
- Propose timelines.



Project Example:

Yellow starthistle local eradication/control in the Whiskey Hill region with an emphasis on roadside populations and private landowner outreach. (Landowners: Private-37, BLM, County Roads, CALTRANS, PG&E, US Forest Service.

· A cooperative spray program will be initiated for private landowners with Acme Pest Control. Acme will reduce charges, based on a bulk rate. On private lands, the landowner, the county and the WMA will cover costs on a 1/3,1/3,1/3 basis.

· Three approximately 100-acre roadside populations of yellow starthistle will be treated using Transline herbicide.

· Opportunities to educate the public will be determined and incorporated where appropriate. Visits to the project will be conducted during any appropriate workshops put on by FWMA.

· FWMA members will share resources to foster program cost savings. All public lands will be treated by responsible land management agencies. Multi-agency collaboration will be required to control 3 roadside populations. A list of the different agencies involved, hours spent on the project, equipment donated, and other project contributions will be developed.

· Monitoring to determine project success will be conducted. Success of the treatment will be evaluated by sampling the reduction in yellow starthistle (percent cover) 6 months and 1 year following treatment with herbicide and comparing it to baseline data collected prior to treatment. Photos will also be taken of each project site on 3 occasions: just before treatment, 6 months after treatment, and 1 year after treatment at the time of cover sampling.

· Work with RCD for re-vegetation and restoration on county roadways with native grasses. Ten miles of county road will be reseeded with native grasses to acquire 50% native grass cover in 2 years. Percent cover of native grasses will be determined by sampling prior to, 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years after reseeding (suspected currently less than 10%). Photos will be taken at the time of sampling and various workdays.

Funding and Finance

- Use the Strategic Plan to define gaps in project funding/
- List goals for grant writing, legislation, or whatever may result in more funding!
- List sources of possible in-kind support.
- Committees? Record keeping?

The END

Let’s go eat BBQ!